

Meeting Minutes  
Delaware Native Species Commission  
June 19, 2019 at 10 am  
Kent County Administrative Building, 555 Bay Road, Dover, Delaware  
Room 221

Minutes approved on: October 16, 2019

**Members Present**

James White, Chair  
Robert Thornton, Vice-Chair  
Michael Petit de Mange (left at 10:55)  
David Saveikis  
Ashley Kennedy  
Michael Costello  
Sarah Cooksey  
Janice Truitt (left at 11:22)  
Katherine Holtz  
Lori Athey

**Members Absent**

Jeffery Downing  
Jessica Inhof  
James McCulley  
Christopher Heckscher  
Tracy Surles

**Administrative Staff**

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III

**Public Present**

Roger Craig  
Steven Dietrich  
Stephen Childers  
Blake Moore  
Liaian Colon  
Jeff Brothers  
Shelia Smith  
Linda Newsome  
Rick Mickowski  
William McAvoy  
Steve Cottrell  
Valann Budischak  
Marcia Fox

### **Call to Order**

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes**

The commission reviewed the minutes of the April 17, 2019 meeting. Ms. Cooksey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Holtz to accept the minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously by the eligible commission members.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### Branding Tagline

Mr. White announced to the Commission that the branding tagline survey had shown that “Delaware, Naturally!” was the top choice among those who responded. Ms. Truitt made a motion, seconded by Ms. Athey to accepted “Delaware, Naturally!” as the tagline for educational items associated with the Commission. The motion carried unanimously.

#### Environmental Symposium

The Education Subcommittee was not able to meet prior to this meeting so forward motion on the symposium has been stunted.

#### Budget

Ms. Cooksey distributed a draft budget for the Commission to review. Discussion followed concerning the line items for Contractual Assistant-\$12,500; Equipment \$1,500 (laptop for admin and contractual assistance); Mileage Reimbursement- \$1,650 (Ms. Childears corrected the estimate to \$4,800 based on calculations using \$.40/mile); Education \$6,000 (a member of the public noted that reprinting brochures could cost upwards of \$5,000 so the education line was adjusted by \$5,000); and Symposium- \$750. The grand total after adjustments would be \$30,550.

There was a discussion about mileage reimbursement for subcommittee meetings, which was not calculated and would increase the budget. Ms. Truitt mentioned possibly holding subcommittee meetings remotely to help keep costs lower. Mr. White mentioned that the Commission would also look into partnering with other organizations and working to get sponsorships.

Mr. Saveikis informed the Commission that Senator Hansen had presented the draft budget to the General Assembly to have something for FY2020. Mr. Saveikis will update Senator Hansen on the revisions to see if there is time to have the newer numbers set before the General Assembly.

#### Public Buildings that are Native Species Centric

Ms. Cooksey distributed a list of Native Gardens in Delaware that are open to the public. The purpose of this list is to provide the public with examples of successful native gardens and what could be done planting native, non-invasive species. It is for the public to learn and recognize native species. The list does not include public areas that were planted for specific purposes, such as rain gardens.

Ms. Athey mentioned the Cooperative Extension sites in the three counties and the New Castle County libraries that should be added to the list. Ms. Truitt mentioned Delaware State University and Dover High School as places that have designated natural sites.

A public member mentioned an area that wasn't a garden but more of a habitat restoration site. Mr. White pointed out that this list is for gardens only and that habitat restoration sites were separate and a next step after identifying public gardens.

Mr. McAvoy, botanist and public member, requested the commission define "native garden" to be clear on the difference between plants that grow in Delaware habitat versus rare species that are truly native to Delaware, which you cannot buy and are not preferred for gardens. In habitat restoration sites you plant truly native species but in gardens, you might plant species that are non-invasive but grow well in Delaware. Ms. Cooksey will rename the list to Mid-Atlantic Native Gardens with a caveat that native has yet to be fully defined for this purpose. That way, the Commission has a handout to start with and can tweak along the way.

Ms. Smith, public member, noted that some gardens are planted to support biodiversity, birds, and wildlife.

Ms. Athey will check the locations of the New Castle County libraries and Mr. White will check state parks and have Mr. Heckscher (who was absent from the meeting) look into Delaware State University.

Ms. Cooksey will collect new locations and present again at the August meeting.

## **New Business**

### Law and Regulations Subcommittee Report

Mr. Petit de Mange reported that the last meeting was April 10 and the subcommittee plans to meet again in July. Work continues with contacting representatives in the three counties to discuss using native species in their stormwater management and drainage improvement plans and looking to draft model ordinance to address eradicating invasive species.

### Education Subcommittee Report

Mr. White filled in for an absent Mr. Downing. The branding tag line was discussed earlier in the meeting. The subcommittee is also having some trouble finding time to organize and create a tabletop display for use during other organizations' events. Mr. White put the call out to contact himself or Mr. Downing if anyone, including the public, would like to spearhead this effort. The subcommittee is also looking for help with getting the symposium going.

Mr. White also announced a July 27<sup>th</sup> event at Mt. Cuba for anyone interested in attending.

### Winter Symposium Work Group Report

This topic was discussed in earlier portions of the meeting.

### Top Ten Tasks

The Commission reviewed their Top 10 list, taken from the recommendations of the Statewide Ecological Extinction Task Force. Mr. White read through the list for the public members. The Commission is working through many of the educational tasks simultaneously. There were no further comments regarding any actions taken or needed at this time.

### Legislation

Mr. Saveikis spoke on behalf of Senator Hansen as to the status of SB84, which will expand the Commission from 15 to 19 members. The four additional members will include the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (or her designee), a botanist, a member representing an environmental organization or educational institute and a member representing commercial or farming interests. The bill has passed the Senate and is moving to the House. Ms. Cooksey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Costello to have Mr. White, as chairperson for the Commission, write a letter of support for SB84 to the General Assembly on behalf of the Commission. The motion carried by a majority, with Mr. Saveikis abstaining from the vote.

Ms. Kennedy stated that her work situation has changed and she is no longer with the University of Delaware. If the bill is passed, she could stay on the commission as a member of the Delaware Ornithological Society. If not, she had several suggestions for a replacement.

### Goals for 2019

Ms. Childears read the goals of the commission all of which are being worked on currently. There was no further discussion.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Saveikis again spoke on behalf of Senator Hansen regarding the draft bill regarding banning the sale, distribution, etc. of invasive plant species. The list of invasive plant species is still pending an update from the Delaware Invasive Species Council and further commission appointments, should SB 84 pass.

In addition, Senator Hansen is still working on introducing a bill to aid attendance at open meetings using video or other technological means. There were was points that caused the bill to be held up but Senator Hansen is committed to bringing it back up next session.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Smith asked for clarification on the tabletop display the Commission discussed. The Commission would like to create a portable tabletop display to use at events around the state. It is different than creating a display for the symposium that has been discussed. Ms. Smith also has a list of organizations that the Commission could contact for collaboration. MS. Smith will email the list to Mr. White and/or Ms. Childears.

Ms. Smith also asked if any actions were taken in regard to #6 on the Commission's Top Ten list, which is "Encourage municipalities to adopt native landscaping in their codes." Mr. White stated that the Commission is still gathering information on that. Mr. Costello stated that the law and regulations subcommittee is working through county codes to find good examples to use.

Ms. Smith asked if he was talking with anyone specific and Mr. Costello said just generally. Ms. Smith works with Newark and can provide specific names.

Mr. Thornton noted that lay people (people that do not study or have a specific interest in plant or wildlife) want to know what to plant to bring back birds. Mr. Thornton believes that is the key to getting public buy-in.

Ms. Smith will contact the commission if anything else comes to mind, stressing that the Commission needs to get organizations on board, create a set of early adopters to using native or non-invasive species only.

Another member of the public discussed his HOA community where they are trying to convert 22 acres from invasive species to meadows or open space. They have run into a problem with funding and wanted to know if the Commission had anything to offer in way of expertise, grant money or anything else. Mr. White noted that one of the goals of the Commission is to be able to provide a list of names for the public but the Commission is not there yet. Several other members of the public provide several ideas and avenues to try.

Ms. Fox, DISC representative and member of the public, discussed a public initiative that was available for a time to help restorations to native spaces but the funding had ceased.

Ms. Fox also provided an update on the DISC list. The Council will be using the Nature Serve Protocol to review its list and create updates. They hope to begin in July and have an updated list available in October.

Ms. Fox also inquired about how to be appointed to the Commission. Ms. Childears directed any interested person to complete an application by visiting the Governor's webpage and looking for Boards and Commission. Lydia Massey is the contact person for that section.

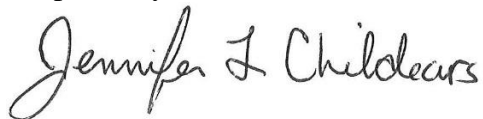
#### **Next Meeting Date and Location**

The next meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2019 in Room 221 at 10:00 am.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer I. Childears". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III  
DNREC, Division of Fish & Wildlife